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ABSTRACT

Some preliminary ideas on narrative inquiry in educational studies and educational reform are presented. Illustrations from Bay Street School (drawn from a 9-year research project on personal knowledge and narrative) are included. Since whatever may be said about narrative as method follows from its character as phenomenon, the aspects of narrative's phenomenal character necessary for discussing method are explained. The elements in an idea of narrative method are noted, with a focus on experience and time, personal knowledge, and reflection and deliberation. In addition, the process of narrative inquiry is discussed. One way to think of the process is that it is possible to find what can be described or accounted for within the experiential texts being created in the shared narrative inquiry process. When researchers record field notes of participant observation, there is an interpretive quality involved. Interpretations are offered because one of the main functions of research from a narrativist point of view is to foster reflection and restorying by the participants. Part of the concern in narrative inquiry is with audience, and narrative researchers must consider issues of representation and audience. Narrative researchers set out their narrative purposes and an appropriate context; they then counsel readers to play the believing game to ascertain the truth of the story. Readers assuming this way of participating in the narrative experience of another must be prepared to see a story's possible meanings and, through this process, come to see other ways of telling their own stories. Contains 52 references. (SM)

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NARRATIVE AND STORY IN PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

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NARRATIVE AND STORY IN PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

> Story... is an ancient and altogether human method. The human being alone among the creatures on the earth is a storytelling animal: sees the present rising out of a past, heading into a future; perceives reality in narrative form. (Novack, 1975, p. 175)

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Phil Bingham[1], an experienced inner city school principal, was transferred to a troubled Kindergarten to Grade 8 school as part of a board of education inner city school renewal program. He became principal at the school, Bay Street, in 1980, the year prior to our arrival as participant observer researchers. At the time of the appointment, Bay Street had a culturally and linguistically mixed student body and had the Board's maximum socioeconomically-based inner city rating for purposes of special funding. The school had a reputation that the Board, teachers and others wanted to change.

Many of Phil's administrative actions were directed toward "establishing a community feeling among the faculty and then moving out into establishing a positive school community relationship". (Notes to file, May 15, 1981). He worked to establish a "warm, friendly, pleasant and secure" environment that would promote "mutual trust" (Notes to file, October 27, 1981). We saw him change the school's physical environment by displaying more student work, having halls and rooms painted and new lighting installed. He organized grade and division meetings to encourage teachers to work collaboratively and he invited parents to participate in school events and in daily school life. Teachers were also encouraged to participate in community events. We came to see these practices as an expression, in part, of an image of community which was rooted in his past experiences as the son of Irish immigrants to Toronto and in his personal way of life as a resident in a small relatively isolated community of homes on Toronto Island.

As a student he attended school in a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood and when he told the story of this part of his life he referred to himself as "being a member of a minority group". As a young teacher he taught in the Island School which he storied as "a real community school" (Notes to file, November 23, 1983) in his talks with us and with parents, teachers and students at Bay Street School. As he went about his daily work at Bay Street we saw his practices as both the living out of his current school-community story and, by doing so, reliving the community stories of his youth and early teaching experiences.

One of the lessons to be learned from the work with Phil is the sense in which school life is a form of living. In school, as in life generally, one's personal history, the traditions of

which one has been a part, and the social and community relations in which one engages, form the plot outlines of day to day life. This is a powerful notion for anyone setting out to understand schooling or to bring about school change. But it is not a new idea. At the beginning of this century, Dewey wrote that education is a form of social life. Narrative inquiry is one way of translating this Dewey conception into practical methods of educational research and reform.

In the following pages, we advance some preliminary ideas on narrative inquiry in educational studies and educational reform. Our work with Phil will appear and reappear as these ideas are developed.

Introduction

Narrative comes to an essay on method as something of a pretender: a something (not a wolf!) in sheep's clothing. Unlike most topics discussed under the rubric of method, narrative, or story if one wishes to be modest and unpretentious (Carr, 1986, p. 4), names a primary phenomenon in education and, indeed, if many are to be believed, a basic phenomenon of life.[2] It is true that in some of its everyday uses, 'story' is thought to point to the opposite of 'phenomena'. It may be thought of as literary fiction, fantasy, pretence or even as lie as, for example, when a child is admonished 'Don't tell stories.' Still, it is certainly not novel to argue that story, and more generally narrative, names a fundamental structure and quality of experience, both personal and social.

Whatever may be said about narrative as 'method' follows from its character as phenomenon. In this paper we outline only those aspects of its phenomenal character necessary for discussing method. Narrative as method may, however, be somewhat less derivative of narrative as phenomena than is suggested by these remarks. If we accept that one of the basic human forms of experience of the world is as story (a point requiring more discussion than could be fully represented in a book let alone in part of the argument of a single paper) and if, further, we take the view that the storied quality of experience is both unconsciously restoried in life, and consciously restoried, retold and relived through processes of reflection, then the rudiments of method are born in the phenomenon of narrative.

Deliberately storying and restorying one's life (or, as we shall see, a group or cultural story) is, therefore, a fundamental method of personal (and social) growth: it is a fundamental quality of education. So called 'narrative research' can only build on this process of growth. Narrative method, in its simplest terms, is the description and restorying of the narrative structure of varieties of educational experience. A researcher's narrative account of an educational event may constitute a restorying of that event and to that extent is on a continuum with the processes of reflective restorying that goes on, one way or another, in each of our educational lives.

Some of this is easily seen in Phil's narrative. While we cannot see here, nor even make the case that, Phil's primary experience was a storied one, his own later telling of his life in terms of community is clearly evident as is the added retelling which developed and grew out of our work with him in Bay Street School. There is an important degree of symmetry between the language he uses to tell his story and the language used in the research narrative. Both have a non-abstract quality; a quality that Crites (1975) says makes it possible to "render the concrete particularities of experience (p. 26). Narrative as research method is, therefore, less a matter of the application of a scholarly technique to understanding phenomena than it is a matter of 'entering into' the phenomena and partaking of them. Thus, when we remove the sheep's clothing of method, we see something that is part and parcel of the phenomena of educational experience.

Elements in an Idea of Narrative Method

Our sense of narrative method would be betrayed if we conveyed either the idea that we had comprehensively thought through the meaning and significance of narrative and narrative method in education or that we had anything by way of a technology, even one so meek as "triangulation", to propose. As we worked with teachers in schools and graduate courses, and teachers-to-be in undergraduate classes and practicum settings, we discovered a collection of rather obvious matters that alternatively, like the figures in figure-ground exercises, either strike us as prosaic and unworthy of attention or significant and fundamental to the understanding of curriculum. We see ourselves turning these matters into subjects of inquiry while at the same time straining to keep the magic in the foreground and the prosaic in the background. We expect that the principal difficulty for those who may imagine themselves interested in narrative is not so much in understanding the subtlety of the ideas, which are mostly commonplace, as it is to be excited by the taken-for-granted. Our list of such matters follows.

Experience: Our imagination has been captured by the possibility of studying experience rather than using experience as a contextual given for educational discourse. We have been impressed with how universal the word 'experience' is in education. It is found in homes, schools, higher education and adult learning institutions. It is found in the most practical discussions of education and it is found in the most revered theoretical texts. It is owned by no subject field and is found in virtually any community of educational discourse. But, to use Adler and Van Doren's (1972, p. 76) distinction, it tends to function as a word, not a term. It is mostly used with no special meaning and functions as the ultimate explanatory context: "Why do teachers, students, or others do what they do? Because of their experience".

We have also noticed that when experience moves in from the contextual shadows and becomes more central to theorizing and to altering practice, it often comes under a kind of suspicious criticism. From the point of view of inquiry, it may be seen as a term that

violates many researchers' notions of academic appropriateness. "Criteria" are lined up to show the inadequacy of those works at the edges of the shadows. Others offer more ideological objection which, in the end, comes down to arguments over the appropriate form of educational reasoning. One such ideological objection is essentially sociological and critical in origin and, roughly speaking, comes from the view that social organization and structure rather than people and experience are the appropriate starting points for educational inquiry. Conversely, there is the argument that experience is too comprehensive, too wholistic and, therefore, an insufficiently analytic term to permit useful inquiry. This argument tends to be given by those who Schon (1983, 1987) and Oakshott (1962) call technical rationalists. Following Schwab (1960) we call these objections, respectively, formalistic and reductionistic. In the light of these objections, the problem of studying experience is to lay claim to the integrity of experience itself and to fend off either its formalistic denial through abstraction and the hegemonies of social organization and structure or its reduction into skills, techniques and tactics. To do so is partly a matter of participating in the 'politics of method' (Eisner, 1988), a process which both Eisner and Pinar (1988a) claim is gaining a foothold for the study of experience in North American educational studies.

For us, keeping experience in the foreground comes about by periodic returns to the works of Dewey. For Dewey, education, experience and life are inextricably intertwined. In its most general sense, when one asks what it means to study education, the answer is to study experience. And, following Dewey, one who studies experience is studying life. One learns about education from thinking about life and one learns about life from thinking about education. Sarason's (1988) recent autobiography makes the point that his life as psychologist and his life at large are intertwined. It is not that he fails to make a distinction between his job as psychologist and the rest of his life. Rather, it is impossible to separate them in practice: he is a human being as psychologist and he is psychologist as a human being. Keeping this sense of the experiential whole before us is one of the tasks we have come to associate with the study of narrative.

Time: Time, like experience and the ether of yesteryear, is everywhere about us yet, for the most part, remains invisible to an inquiring mind. There are works on time in sociology (e.g. Zerubavel, 1979, 1981, 1985; Young and Schuller, 1987; Young, 1988) and in the philosophy of phenomenology (e.g. Ricoeur, 1984). But mostly they have not found their way into educational inquiry. One notable exception is seen in the time-on-task literature where time is treated as a linear, quantifiable variable seemingly disconnected from notions of educational experience. Following Jackson's (1985) and Philips' (1985) criticism of the idea as expressed in a book titled "Perspectives on Instructional Time" (Fisher and Berliner, 1983) the idea seems to have returned to the shadows. Following Schon, (1983, 1987) it might be said that the reason for the failure of this version of educational inquiry into time was the reductionism imposed by the technical rational logic of the time-on-task literature. But we think a subtler reason is

evident in the critics' argument. Jackson calls the set of inquiries 'banal' and Philips refers to the work as 'trivially true'. In effect, for Jackson and Philips, time, in these inquiries, failed to become a figure and remained in the background.

What might it mean to treat time non-trivially, that is, to give it the magic of 'figure' in inquiry? One approach is a phenomenological one in which the idea of time is built up from the experience of it. According to Carr (1986), if we still our minds and focus on our moment by moment experience, we discover a "pre-thematic" awareness of history. Quite apart from its intellectual and cultural content we sense the passing of time, an experience which Crites (1975) claims has the simultaneous qualities of memory (of the past) and anticipation (of the future). This phenomenological approach to time, though limited in important ways outlined by Carr, inextricably links the notions of time and experience. Experience, in this view, is unlike an object, thing, or concept of which portraits may be sketched. It has, instead, the quality of an event or action. It is something which, at all times, has a past-future structure.

The relationship of past and future may be more or less passive or active; more or less an experiential "undergoing" or a "trying" (Dewey, 1916, p. 139). Carr describes the elementals of experience as 'events' and 'actions', the former merely occurring ("undergoing") and the second occurring by intention ("trying"). This distinction creates the potential for reflection and deliberate restorying and contains the nucleus of a counter argument to those who spell out the study of education in terms of reproduction and hegemony. The central significance of this line of thought for the study of narrative is that the study of experience as figure is simultaneously the study of time as figure: they go together as one.

Because of the intimate relationship between the ideas of experience and time, our return to Dewey to refresh the sense of experience as figure, also refreshes the sense of time as figure. The idea of time was expressed by Dewey (1938) in his notion of 'continuity'. Continuity is one of two criteria of experience for Dewey and refers to the succession of situations within which experience occurs. Without continuity, there is no such thing as experience. Furthermore, every experience is what it is, in part, because of what is brought to it, via prior experience, and, in part, because of its influence on the future brought about by the alterations that occur in what Dewey calls the internal and environmental conditions of an experience.

There is more to the idea of time in Dewey than a first reading of continuity might suggest, that is, a suggestion of an endless sequence of experiences. More than thirty years before Kermode (1966) used the "tick-tock" metaphor of the clock to demonstrate his idea of the elementary temporal plot structure of narrative, Dewey (1934) developed the metaphor both to show how time, while having the quality of continuity, was experienced cyclically and rhythmically. Cyclic repetition is one of the bases for rhythm

and it is in rhythm that "there is that sudden magic that gives us a sense of an inner revelation brought to us about something we have supposed to be known through and through." (Dewey, 1934, pp. 170-171)

Time, far from being the untouchable background ether in which we were once thought to live, is part of the criterial definition of experience and is one of those foreground matters that conveys both "magic" and meaning in the study of educational experience. Keeping the continuous, cyclic and rhythmic senses of time before us is another task we have come to associate with the study of narrative.

Personal Knowledge: One of the most persistent educational polemics is that of the sanctity of the individual child. It is a practical notion that appears to respond both to parental concern for specific children and to the individualism which many say is at the core of North American notions of opportunity and social progress. Curriculum textbooks and documents are frequently graced by diagrams and schemata of children placed in the centre of a set of expanding circles or rectangles of educational factors and forces. Surely no teacher can have missed exhortations to heed individual differences and to attend to the needs of every child.

From considerations such as these we could only imagine that if there is one thing that educational inquiry will have done in its 90 or so formal years of existence on the North American continent, it must have yielded insight into what it means for a person to undertake an education. But, with some noteworthy exceptions catalogued in works such as Eisner (1988), Pinar (in press), and Elbaz (1988), the study of what an education is or means for individuals is mostly absent in scholarly discourse. More remarkably there are strong and vocal academic arguments against the study of an individual being educated on the grounds that to study a person's education is to do something indefensably subjective, non-generalizable and solipsistic. What is seen as foreground in the heartfelt practical arguments of parents and others tends to be denied by the head in scholarly inquiry. There is a theory-practice schism on the place of the individual in our figure-ground metaphor.

How is it possible to make the study of a person's education both theoretically interesting while retaining the foreground magic of the practical position? One inquiry version, similar in logical form to the time-on-task studies noted above, is evident in the performance studies of administrative 'leadership' and 'expert vs novice' teachers. In both cases, superior performers, defined as such by the researchers or by the researchers' approval of others' reports of same, are studied and either profiled as cases for modelling purposes or analyzed into tasks and skills for purposes of training others via 'coaching' and other methods.

There is an unflattering side to this literature which goes beyond begging the question of what "leadership" or "expertness" is in practice. The literature contains an implicit scale of superiority which leads some researchers (e.g. Berliner, 1986) to claim that ordinary practitioners are not worth studying and, beyond that, to the frightful arrogance of calling particular teachers "ordinary" and, of course, saying the same of those who study them.

These various defects may be remediated and are not, in the end, the main reason that the individual ultimately fades from figure to background in such studies. It is because most of those who pursue this research follow the logic of reduction. The claim, in the end, is to know, not the person, but a collection of skills which mark excellent performance, and which may then be taught. An "expert" person becomes a collection of reproduceable and educable skills. Such thinking, says Oakshott (1962), overlooks both experience and tradition. In education, as in politics (Oakshott's subject), the set of technical skills became a "crib to politics, a political training in default of the political education, a technique for the ruler who has no tradition" (p. 25).

In this criticism of "expertise" and "leadership", several characteristics of the individual, and what we call the "personal", are evident. First, the individual to be educated already has an educational history. Even at its simplest level, the learning of a new technique consists, as Oakshott says, "in reforming knowledge which is already there" (p.12). Prior knowledge will not be wished away and may act as prison (Britzman, 1986) as well as resource for liberation (Clandinin, 1989). This biographical element is evident in works such as those of Pinar (1988b) and Grumet (1988). Second, the reference to tradition is a reminder that an adequately conceived biography is as much a representation of a culture as it is a revelation of a unique individual. Critics of biography and autobiography in education often reduce the interest in personal history to narcissism or to a naive overlooking of hegemonic social structures of power and control by biographic researchers. But culture is in the foreground along with the individual. The social, as Johnson (1987) shows, is embodied in the individual though not only, nor even mostly, in simple social reproduction terms. The relationship is a dynamic one in which the social is reconstructed for a personal life story and in which the larger social structures themselves are influenced by personal action. In his autobiography, Sarason (1988) writes "In beginning to write, I was aware that my overarching purpose was to tell the story of how in the post-world world II era, the field of psychology and the larger society had undergone transformations undreamed of before that war. And I wanted to do that by describing my career, which started before that war" (pp. xii-xiii). In short, Sarason's autobiography is intended to tell a story of the growth and development of North American psychology. It is a story in which Sarason is, of course, influenced by the larger history and structure of American psychology. But it is also a story of Sarason's personal construction of this tradition and of his reciprocal influences on it. In education, this cultural telling via a study of the personal is

beginning to be explored by examining the ways cultural knowledge of teaching is storied in myths (Britzman, 1986) and folk knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988a).

A third matter is seen in revisitations with Dewey. For Dewey, experience is always social such that a person is never an individual only. Nor, is a person merely social. Rather, a person is a dialectic blend of the individual and the social, a notion closely akin to Polanyi's (1958) concept of the personal. Dewey's example (1897) to illustrate these marks of the personal is his story of the babbling baby who is educated to understand the meanings of his or her babblings through the cultural responses of the mother. The babblings are eventually shaped to form one or another language and the facial and other bodily expressions and emotions that accompany the babblings are likewise shaped by the individual and culture of those who respond to the child's babblings. Written large this process characterizes an education, both teaching and learning, in both social and individual terms. There is, furthermore, an agency in this account that denies the hegemonies of critical theory since the well-springs of the process are ultimately individual and not social. The babbling wells up from the baby. But its meaning is gained socially.

Thus, when the individual is treated as figure, the personal emerges which is neither individual nor social but is both. We find that the primary language of the personal needs simultaneously to be individual, social, cultural and personally historical as in biography. Keeping these marks of the personal before us is a third task that we have come to associate with the study of narrative.

Reflection and Deliberation: Reflection and deliberation are terms which refer to methods of practical inquiry and are springboards for thinking of narrative and story as method. We could, with some justification, make our case with either term. But because they are so commonplace in thinking about everyday thinking, and because they tend to point in different temporal directions, we propose to use them both. Reflection has a 'looking back' sense about it, a casting back, whereas deliberation has a forward sense, a sense of preparation for the future. While it is clear enough that reflection commonly implies a preparation for the future and that deliberation implies past considerations, on balance, the mind tends to lean to the past with 'reflection' and to the future with 'deliberation'. Since narrative requires a balanced treatment of past, present and future, we have settled on a consideration of both terms.

Both terms refer to practical reasoning and yield uncertain results. The 1980's, no less it seems than the 1920's when Dewey wrote "The Quest for Certainty" (1929), place a high value on security and certainty in inquiry. These values, as Dewey, Schwab (1970, 1971, 1973, 1983) in his arguments for deliberative method, and Schon (1983, 1986), in his arguments for reflective practice, show, are part of a long tradition of socially embodied theory-practice divisions in which practice is viewed as demeaning while thinking is viewed as pleasurable and rewarding.

Both Schwab and Schon accept a distinction between theory and practice and argue that for practical fields such as education, the highest value ought to attach to corresponding practical methods, that is, to deliberation and reflection respectively. Both cast their arguments in terms of a criticism of the certainty attached to theoretical methods. Schwab does this by showing how the reliance on theory made educational inquiry mostly irrelevant to educational practice and Schon by showing how performance and learning to perform in a professional field consists of reflective methods which are opposed to the technical rationalism of theory application.

But Dewey's aim is to bring about a "destruction of the barriers which have divided theory and practice" (Dewey, 1929, p.24). His concern is to conceive of a dialectic wholeness of theory and practice. It is a notion in which social movements, such as education, constitute the whole in which "conflicts and controversies" (1938, p. 4) define the practical and theoretical starting points of inquiry. Further, any inquiry, at any level within the social movement, has theoretical and practical dimensions which mutually influence one another. Still further, through the notions of continuity and interaction, every such inquiry has contexts of tradition and social direction and interacts with the surrounding social setting in which it is embedded. Thus, every social movement is a dynamic mix of theory-practice elements, and every inquiry within it has theory-practice set within the larger movement. Following Schutz and Luckmann (1973) we could say that every inquiry within a social movement has a horizon beyond which matters are taken for granted, considered certain, but which, at any moment, may be doubted and opened for inquiry. Shifting the horizon shifts the course and outcomes of inquiry.

It should be clear from these considerations that doubt and uncertainty are the hallmarks of any meaningful social inquiry in Dewey's dialectic. One might say with some justification that meaning and certainty tend to be inversely related in social inquiry so conceived. Deliberation and reflection (which was also Dewey's preferred method term) become, therefore, methods for charting a meaningful though uncertain course in social affairs.

For purposes of narrative, these considerations remind us that reflection and deliberation are methods which move back and forth in time carrying with them uncertainty. A narrative is always tentative to a degree. It "produces likehood" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 175), not certainty. Furthermore, a narrative is both inescapably practical and theoretical, as in Schon, Schwab, and Dewey. Reflection and deliberation name the processes to which practitioners and researchers commit themselves in the construction of stories and narratives. A narrative construction is practical because it is concerned with a person's experience in time and it is uncertain because the stories that are told and retold could be otherwise as indeed can the narrative threads and the intentional futures to which they attach. The uncertainly is

not merely, nor even mostly, a function of the researchers interpretive competence. It is principally dependent on two things: on the specific practitioner and/or researcher interest in constructing the narrative and on their horizons which wall off continuous temporal domains of personal biography and social tradition and social domains of community and culture. Finally, and perhaps most important, reflection and deliberation are the methods by which one's life, and the stories of it, are restoried for purposes of re-living. It is the way to chart a course amidst biographic, cultural and traditional bonds. Reflection and deliberation treat these matters, both for a person and for a researcher's account of a person, as theoretical elements in the telling of a story and as practical elements in the living of a story.

The elements of experience, time, personal knowledge, reflection and deliberation which we want to keep as figure in inquiry, are played out in the narrative work with Phil. This work revealed some of the important ways his education, experience and life were intertwined. His life as community-oriented principal is inextricably intertwined with his adult way of life as a resident in the Toronto Island community and with his childhood and school experiences. We saw his administrative practices as the way these past experiences are 'recollected' and 'reconstructed' (notions we attribute, respectively, to Crites - and Dewey) for the purpose of shifting Bay Street school's direction to a more desirable future. In terms of narrative these administrative actions are both flickerings of the past and rudimentary future scenarios. Both the past and a possible future are visible in the actions of the present. We see the personal knowledge of the individual as figure at the same time as we see the professional and social culture in which Phil, the person, has come to know his practices as school principal. And in the narrative inquiry process with Phil we came to understand reflection and deliberation as the way in which he storied and restoried his life for purposes of acting.

We now turn our attention to a more detailed working out of some methodological aspects of the process of narrative inquiry. We treat matters of data collection, interpretation, analysis, reflection and restorying and audience.

The Process of Narrative Inquiry

The preceding sections provide some sense of the complexity of the phenomena of narrative and of ways of thinking about narrative as educational research method. Given the nature of narrative, one of the primary questions for anyone undertaking a narrative study is to design a strategy for continually assessing the multiple levels (temporally continuous and socially interactive) at which the inquiry proceeds. The central task is evident when it is grasped that a person is both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text, and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others. More dramatically for the researcher, this is the smallest portion of the complexity since a life is also a matter of growth toward an imagined

future and, therefore, involves restorying and attempts at reliving. A person is, at once, then, engaged in living, telling, retelling and reliving stories.

It may be thought that seeing and describing story in the everyday actions of teachers, students, administrators and others would require a properly subtle twist of mind on behalf of the enquirer, and so it does. Still, it is in the tellings and retellings that entanglements may become acute for it is here that one is forever setting and resetting temporal and social/cultural horizons. How far of a probe into the participants' past and future is far enough? Which community spheres should be probed and to what social depth should the inquiry proceed? When one engages in narrative inquiry the process becomes even more complex for, as researchers, we become part of the process. Our narratives are lived, told and retold in the research process. Thus, the two narratives of participant and researcher become, in part, a shared narrative construction and reconstruction through the inquiry.

Narrative method involves participant observation, shared work in a practical setting. The process is one of a joint living out of two person's narratives, researcher and practitioner, so that both participants are continuing to tell their own stories but the stories are now being lived out in a collaborative setting. The data for this collaboratively lived narrative involves field notes of the shared experience, journal records made by one or both of the participants, interview transcripts of discussions between the two participants, researcher and participant, and the stories shared.

In our work with Phil, we have the ongoing data of the joint living and telling of the shared story which is an account of the narrative experience. As researchers we had shared in Phil's storying and restorying of his past experiences as we shared in the work of his present practices at Bay Street School. He used stories to explain present actions and to give accounts to staff, parents and others including ourselves. But, as the following note of a Bay Street School staff meeting indicates, we also shared in the stories he was creating as we lived out our lives as participant observers in the ongoing work of the school. We had made the following record of an exchange about a possible Spring Festival with which Phil wanted the school to be involved. He made reference to his participation in a local community advisory committee for Pincher Creek Park, a high-rise housing development close to the school. The community advisory committee had planned to hold a Spring Festival. Phil was talking about this Festival as a response to a staff proposal to sponsor a Friends of Bay Street Dance.

> Phil said they (the Advisory Committee) have been very concerned about the 'bad' press they (the housing development) have had and wondered why they can't see the good side. Phil said that on 'your behalf, meaning on behalf of the school', he sits on the Pincher Creek Park Advisory Committee. He said the people there wanted to know how they could change their image. They said something about the police only coming in on a crisis. They have decided they

> wanted to have a festival in the Spring that would have both the police and the press involved and they would have a street dance here. The band would be the "Copper Tones", the police band. (Notes to file, February 22, 1983).

Later at the same staff meeting, our field notes indicated the following.

> He said that Bay Street School is part of this community too. He then said it would be good to have a multicultural festival in the school yard and have Portuguese dancers and it would be a fund raising event as well. He said something about the multicultural restaurant and they would have ideas too. He then said, "I did this once before at Okotoks School and we made $1900." He said Dorothy had been involved in that and it had been amazing and it had been a multicultural festival and for that they didn't have a street dance. (Notes to file, February 22, 1983).

These notes are excerpted from the record of the ongoing narrative, the telling in practice, in which we participated with Phil and other Bay Street School Staff. After the staff meeting we, with other Bay Street staff, told ourselves stories in which we expressed surprise that Phil had not supported the first idea brought up by a group of staff members for a Friends of Bay Street dance which they thought of as, "the first annual friendship dance". He had, instead, talked about his interest in, and support for, the Spring Festival. We were trying to make sense of Phil's support for the community's Spring Festival rather than the staff initiated proposal for a dance. As researchers, we were participating in the ongoing daily work of Bay Street School and collaboratively trying to make sense of ongoing practices with Phil and other staff members. We were part of the unfolding story Phil was creating. We were also making sense with Phil in our conversations, of the ways in which his present practices were a restorying of past experiences.

In narrative work on personal practical knowledge, data can originate in researcher observation, participant observation of practice, and observations by other participants. Data may also be generated by the participants through personally reflective methods such as journal keeping, story telling, letter writing and autobiographical work such as those involved in the writing of personal annals and chronicles. In the research process, the researcher adds his/her own reflective voice. For example, the researcher voice in working with participants may respond to a teacher's stories with questions about why the story was told in the way it was. By answering the researcher's question, the participants may penetrate more deeply to other experiences to trace the emotionality attached to her/his particular way of storying events and this, from the point of view of research, also constitutes data.

In narrative inquiry data also includes a whole array of nonstoried material such as classroom plans and class newsletters. As well, teachers write in non-storied ways about rules, principles, pictures, metaphors and personal philosophies. Beyond that, narrative

researchers are concerned with the moral, emotional and aesthetic qualities of all of these forms of data.

Movement from experience to researcher and practitioner field notes, transcripts, documents, and descriptive storying of the experienced narrative, to a mutual reconstruction of a narrative account, characterizes the process of narrative inquiry. As participants, both researchers and practitioners, engage in the collaborative process of narrative inquiry, they work through a mutual reconstruction of the telling of the story in practice that has been captured in field notes, transcripts and documents. This process is illustrated in our work with Phil. We began with the descriptive storying captured in our field notes, interview transcripts and other data and moved to a mutually constructed narrative account which offered a way of giving an account of our work together. We began to reconstruct the narrative around an image of community which found expression in his practices. We saw, for example, the narrative reconstruction of the staff meeting practices as part of an image of community, an expression of a narrative unity in his life. The experiential threads of the narrative were found in Phil's stories about his childhood and school experiences in inner city Toronto; in his stories about his experiences on Toronto Island as a child and as an adult; his and others' stories about his first teaching experience in the Island school and in his later experiences at Okotoks and Lundbreck Schools. Phil's personal narrative was embedded within the cultural and historical narratives of his immigration to Toronto as the son of Irish parents; the Toronto School Board; inner city Toronto schools and more generally Ontario education.

When we began to offer a narrative interpretation to Phil of the practices at the staff meeting as an expression of an image of community, he began to story his early school experiences of home, family, school and work. He told us stories about his family's summer and weekend excursions to Toronto Island, a small vibrant community, and about their later move to the Island. He shared stories such as the following one about his own school experience in a school with a large Jewish population.

> He had been sent to school in short pants. He and another boy in short pants were caught by older students who put them in a blanket. Phil had escaped while the other boy was trapped. He went home saying he was never going to go back to that school again. He said he understood about being a member of a minority group but he said he didn't look like a minority. He said you understood if you've had the experience (Notes to file, April 15, 1981 and November 23, 1983).

As we continued our work in the school we learned more about Phil. He had first taught at the Island School for two years and he continued to have a home in the Island community (Notes to file, June 16,1981). In a presentation in July, 1983 to a group of administrators, Phil talked again about the Island School as his first teaching

assignment. In response to our remarks that he was a community-oriented principal, he said "It all goes back to my family and to my early life on the Island." He went on to say "The Island School was a real community school." (Notes to file, July 14, 1983).

What should be clear from this temporally muddled set of data collection events is that the narrative inquiry process is not a linear one. There is data collection, mutual narrative interpretation by practitioners and researchers, more data collection and further narrative reconstruction. The narrative inquiry process itself is a narrative one of storying, restorying and restorying again.

In our work with Phil we understood the image of community with new meaning when interpreted in light of his narrative. We are led to another restorying when we view the image of community as one of organic unity in which the school serves and performs functions for the community. And while we understand that Phil believes the school itself should be conceived as a community, the fuller expression of the image of making the larger community central and the school an organ in service of it, is part of the narrative reconstruction. When we returned to the notes of the staff meeting we sensed more deeply the importance for Phil of Bay Street School becoming a part of the community during the conceiving, planning and execution of the festival. We sensed the importance he attached to the view that the festival not be the school's festival but that it be the community's.

From the above, it should be clear that we did not set out to understand Phil in terms of the concept of narrative unity or even in terms of an image of community. We began by observing particular practices and by being surprised by what we saw as inconsistent practices. It was in trying to make sense of his practices that we began to sense a tension that alerted us to the possibility of something important in the ways that Phil's practices were expressions of his personal practical knowledge. It was in working from our sense of tension or incongruity in his practices through the personal knowledge account that we began to develop a construct to account for the underlying unity in his action.

Narrative inquirers, tend not to begin with a prespecified problem and set of hypotheses. Instead they are inclined to begin with an interest in a particular phenomenon which could be understood narratively, such as, teachers personally held instructional knowledge in the work of Elbaz (1982, 1983), translation in the work of Enns-Connolly (1985), second language learning in Conle's (1989) work, or collaboration and practice in our work (Clandinin and Connelly, 1988, Clandinin, 1986) and try to make sense of the practice from the perspective of the participants, researcher and practitioner. One way of thinking of the process is that we find what we can describe or give an account of within the experiential texts we are creating in the shared narrative inquiry process.

Interpretation in Narrative Inquiry

In narrative inquiry, we hold that human experience has a storied quality. One of the consequences of this view is that the descriptions that each of us give of our experiences as children, teachers, researchers and members of school and community groups are descriptions of these narrative phenomena. These descriptions are a way of telling our story of our experience which itself has a narrative quality. Initially, a narrative researcher is concerned with description, that is, a recording of events in field notes, a recording of participants' talk in interviews and a recording of their stories. The work has a quality of description about it. But even in these descriptive records, there is an interpretive quality for when we story ourselves for others, as in Phil's story of his experience as a minority student in school, we are engaged in offering an interpretation of the stories we are living out in our experiences. And when we, as researchers, record field notes of participant observation, there is an interpretive quality that enters into the notes that we keep.

In narrative inquiry, as for example in our work with Phil, the research act of coming to a participant's storied account would again be an interpretive one based on field observations, participant observation work, interviews and participants' stories. As researchers participating in the narrative inquiry process, we tell our own interpretive stories of our experiences. The construction of a narrative account arising from that database also has an interpretive quality. We offer other ways of telling the story that offers constructs such as narrative unities, images, rhythms and so on as a way of giving an adequate, telling, account.

In the construction of narrative accounts, ways of telling an individual's story as embedded within particular cultures and histories are offered. Accounts of how the individual is shaped by the larger professional knowledge context and also the ways in which the professional knowledge context has been reshaped in the unique situation in which the individual lives and works are constructed. In narrative inquiry the individual is shaped by the situation and shapes the situation in the living out of the story and in the storying of the experience.

These interpretations are offered because one of the main functions of research from a narrativist point of view is to foster reflection and restorying on the part of participants. The first, and central, contribution lies in the interactive relations between practitioner and researcher which leads to a mutual, collaborative telling and retelling of the participants', both practitioner and researcher, stories. This leads to a consideration of the way in which participation in a narrative inquiry opens participants to understanding change in their practices (Clandinin, 1989; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988b).

There are, however, different goals for the practitioner/participant and the researcher/participant. Those goals are meaningful only within a larger social narrative shared by both. The practitioner continues to work and so the restorying is expressed in reshaped relations with children, the school, the local community and so on. We see something like this in Phil's story when he begins to restory himself more explicitly as telling a story of community school relations as he did in the joint presentation to the administrators. The researcher also has this goal of restorying his/her narrative in his/her practices. There are, however, other goals for the researcher. The second goal for the researcher involves the more formal aspects of the story: a story that the researcher has confidence may be read with meaning by others. This question of audience is what primarily separates the interests of researcher and practitioner/participant in narrative inquiry. The practitioner/participant, in the end, is storying his or her experience and so must live out the experience. The researcher, while also restorying his or her own experience through the research process wants others, an audience of other practitioners and researchers, to read narratively the one narrative presented in the research account. A third goal for the researcher is to develop theoretical constructs, such as 'narrative unity' developed in our work with Phil, which begin to offer a language for thinking and talking about experience, practice and teacher knowledge.

Narrative Audience

Researchers write narratives for a larger audience than their participants, that is, themselves and the practitioners, in the narrative inquiry. The question of rendering an account for a larger audience raises issues around the ways in which researchers should write accounts of narrative inquiry and the ways in which such accounts should be read. Part of the concern in narrative inquiry, is with audience. With reports of narrative inquiry something of the spirit of the participants, practitioner and researcher, has to go into the account of the research. Narrative researchers need to concern themselves with issues of representation and audience.

Why is narrative research rendered for a larger audience? Is it not enough that it has engendered new ways of storying practices and ways of knowing for the participants in the narrative inquiry? We saw above, for example, Phil's restorying of his practices. Narrative researchers' purposes in writing for a larger audience are to have readers raise questions about their practices, their ways of knowing. Researchers want to share their narrative inquiries in ways that help readers question their own stories, raise their own questions about practices and see in the narrative accounts stories of their own stories. As people read narrative accounts, the intent is to foster reflection, storying and restorying for them. Other narrative researchers such as Rose (1983) share similar purposes in writing for a larger audience. Rose's intent is that "the work as a whole will suggest new truths especially the extent to which all living is a creative act of greater or less authenticity, hindered or helped by the fictions to which we submit ourselves." (p.17).

To be a reader of a narrative is to be drawn into a story, to find a place or way of seeing through participating in the story. Crites reminds us that the completeness of a story consists "in the immediacy with which narrative is able to render the concrete particularities of experience. Its characteristic language is not conceptual but consists typically in the sort of verbal imagery we employ in referring to things as they appear to our senses or figure in our practical activities. Still more important the narrative form aesthetically reproduces the temporal tensions of experience, a moving present tensed between and every moment embracing a memory of what has gone before and an activity projected, underway." (Crites, 1975, p.26). In this Crites gives a sense of what narrative researchers try to capture in their writings in order to invite readers into the narrative. In narrative accounts, researchers' attempt to have the reader understand enough of the participants ' experiences so that the reader can share something of what the experience might have been for the participants. In order to do this a reader must make a genuine effort to share in the experience of the participants. As a reader, it involves a kind of giving up of self in order to enter another experience. It is something akin to what Elbow calls the "believing game", "an act of self-insertion" (p. 149). At its best it is a dialogue process which allows a reader to share some qualities of the participants experience. In order to allow readers to engage in this process narrative researchers need to consider the ways in which readers are drawn into the narrative and to distinguish between alternative possible stories which they may construct. There are several possibilities. One is where the piece is read within the same researcher/participant purposes, as, for example, a reader who understands Phil's work with various community ethnic groups from a reading of Phil's narrative. Another possible way of reading would be for a radically different purpose, such as, for example, to see Phil's narrative as a way of illustrating administrative hegemony.

What narrative authors can do is make very clear their own narrative purpose and, therefore, set what they deem to be the appropriate context for storying the data. A reading such as the latter one of Phil above would become irresponsible given such narrative purpose.

However, as researchers and practitioners know, we must be sensitive to the legitimate alternative stories that might be told given the data as presented and the purpose of the research. It is on those grounds that one can hope that readers of narrative will play the "believing game" within the stated purposes of the narrative text.

But the text may be used for multiple purposes and for purposes unimagined by the original authors. As Novak (1975) reminds us, "a story, once told, no longer belongs solely to the story teller. It has existence independently of his will, intentions, or analysis. It is an object accessible to others. Others may see in it what the storyteller does not. Story is not narcissism or subjectivity, but its opposite: the making of an independent object" (p.199). And so it is in writing, and reading, narrative research

accounts. Ultimately every narrativist researcher will suffer both blessing ('she saw more in what I wrote than I ever imagined') and blight ('she saw my participants as no more than blind reproducers of social inequity'). Narrativist researchers set out their narrative purposes and set out an appropriate context and then counsel readers to play the believing game to ascertain the truth of the story. Readers assuming this way of participating in the narrative experience of another must be prepared to see the possible meanings there are in the story and, through this process, come to see possible other ways of telling their own stories.

Notes

[1]The illustrations from Bay Street school are drawn from a nine year research project on personal knowledge and narrative. To ensure privacy 'Phil' is a pseudonym.

[2]There are important distinctions which might be made between 'narrative' and 'story'. But for discussions of social science research the two terms are often collapsed with no great loss of precision. Polkinghorne (1988), for example, reviews possible uses of both terms and ends up treating them as equivalent (p. 13); a position close to that adopted by Carr. We have an in-between usage. When referring to participant situations - e.g. classroom field records, interview data and so on - we tend to use 'story' to refer to particular situations and 'narrative' to refer to longer term life events. Thus, we would tend to say that 'Phil told us a story about a child in our meeting this morning.' and 'The meaning of this morning's story in Phil's narrative of community relations is...'. Everyday speech patterns modify this loose distinction and we would more often say 'Deliberately storying and restorying one's life...' rather than 'Deliberately narrating and renarrating one's life...'. We would, however, follow Carr and Polkinghorne here and treat the two expressions as equivalent. When we refer to research, research method and researchers we use the term 'narrative' exclusively. For example, we would say 'Narrative researchers, as Mischler (1986) shows, are engaged in the collection of stories when conducting interviews'.

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